

## **THE CROWN OF THORNS**

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May 8, 2017 - Monday Teleconference  
Transcribed from audio ref # 180

## THE CROWN OF THORNS

### Matthew 27:28 - 31

28. And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe.

29. And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews!

30. And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head.

31. And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him.

### Mark 15:17

17. And they clothed him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his head

### John 19:2,3 & 5

2. And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe,

3. And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands.

5. Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!

Tonight, let us behold the man. There  
are four "beholds" in the  
scriptures that point to the four Gospels.

I.Your God - John's Portrait of Jesus

1. Isaiah 40:9 O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get  
thee up into  
the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that  
bringest good tidings, lift

up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!

z.Your King - Matthew's Portrait of Jesus

1. Isaiah 32:1 Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness and princes shall rule in judgment.
2. Jeremiah 23:5 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.
3. Zechariah 9:9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.

3.My Servant - Mark's Portrait of Jesus

1. Isaiah 42:1 Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.
5. Isaiah 52:13 Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.
6. Zechariah 3:8 Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH.
4. The Man - Luke's Portrait of Jesus
  7. Zechariah 6:12 And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD.

These give you four aspects of the person of the Lord, in the four Gospels as: king, servant, man (sinless), and God himself in the image of man. That is enough to keep you for a while to meditate on.

Our focus tonight will be on the humiliation of this man. Have you stopped to consider that the King of Glory, comes to earth and faces such limited conditions and yet he never complains. We see him in such a role that his very character amazes us. Think of the agony and the griefs that he experienced, and Isaiah 53 goes through the list of

those sufferings. We cannot help but bow our knees to this one who is not only man, but God made manifest in the flesh.

Please notice the expression, "a crown of thorns". We will bring out 13 things about this crown.

8. The material of the crown,

9. The making of the crown.

10. The misery of the

crown.

4- The mockery of the

crown.

11. The meaning of the crown.

12. The mystery of the crown.

13. The message of the crown.

In days gone by, I would stand amazed when I focused on the Lord and his sufferings and while viewing his sufferings, including the "crown of thorns") I never had much understanding of the humiliation of our Lord. Neither do I claim to have the depths of understanding of his humiliation, but when you consider the subject, you will have to go back to the beginning of the Bible, to the book of Genesis to shed light on this matter.

In the beginning we read of God making everything to suit his purpose; there was a creation resulting in a chaos. Then there was a reconstitution of the chaotic condition of the earth, as God began to set things in order that were in an upheaval. We have the work of the six days leading on to the seventh day to make the earth habitable for man. Long before Adam and Eve transgressed against God's commandments, the world at that time was a thornless world. And may you consider that thought very carefully! When God looked at his work he was pleased with it, and there is no mention of thorns prior to the fall of man. Imagine a world in which there were no thorns and yet there were roses without thorns. Consider that mystery, because all we are familiar with in our current world is that you cannot find a rose without thorns. But you see dear friends, God's ways are not our ways and his thoughts are not our thoughts. Thorns are the result of sin, as

we read in Genesis 3 where God was holding man to an accounting, we read;

Genesis 3:17-19 17- And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

18. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; note

19. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

When we think of the enormity of sin and consider a world with roses without thorns, and briars absent from berries, our minds cannot fathom that sufficiently. Today, thorns and briars are everywhere.

#### 1. The Material of the crown.

If you consider the material of the thorn, that is a whole subject in itself. You can research it, but according to what applied to the time when the Lord was ministering in Israel, there were 25 kinds of thorns. Imagine that. The material of the thorn links with the fall of man and it links with the word curse. So, when we get to the New Testament we will find why Jesus is wearing a "crown of thorns". There is a verse in Galatians chapter 3 we will look at and it is a key verse if we will follow closely.

Galatians 3:13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

Think on those words, but it does not end there.

Galatians 3:14 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Notice that the opposite to the word curse is blessing. So why did the Lord allow himself to be crowned with this garland of thorns if it did not have some relevance. As I said, because of the curse, we sin and death reigns on earth. But Jesus comes to conquer sin and death, and bring in the blessings **of** Abraham.

It is good to know that the Bible begins with the book of Genesis, and at the end of Genesis we read of the death of a good man by the name of Joseph. That is a strange way for a book to end, with death. The last book of the Old Testament ends with the word curse; "lest **I** come and smite the earth with a curse". The New Testament begins with Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. As the son of David he will wield power on a greater scale than David knew, and as son of Abraham he would become both the priest and the sacrifice. As such he would take the curse, that the human race would be blessed. When you come to the dose of Revelation, how does the new covenant end? "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." Right there you have another message to slowly meditate upon. The wages of sin is death, the ground is cursed and it seems that God's plan to make man in his image is defeated, but not so. God never deviated from that plan, and when we look at Jesus Christ, he is that man that is a greater than Adam. And it is Jesus who was willing to face the judgement due the whole human race through Adam to release the blessings of grace. We all should have thankful hearts when we think of this!

## 2. The making of the crown.

This "crown of thorns" was made **by** the hands of man. One cannot make a "crown of thorns" without pricking the fingers with these thorns. They were very sharp, and once pricked the blood begins to flow. What is that telling us? If we play with sin we will pay the

consequences. The Bible warns us about this, if we sow to the flesh we shall reap corruption, and if we sow to the wind we shall reap the whirlwind. Be sure that your sin will find you out, and those who are sinners and continue in sin are already paying for their sinful life and actions. Remember, sin always demands blood for blood. Think about man having a role in making this "crown of thorns", and though he did not know it he was acknowledging that his sinful blood must be atoned for by the sinless blood of the Lamb of God.

### 3. The misery of the crown.

The "crown of thorns" was made and placed and hammered on his head in mockery of a coronation. Isn't it sad, Jesus claimed to be King, he demonstrated the power of the kingdom, he gave the laws pertaining to his kingdom, but he was not received as king. Remember, he did not come to overthrow the Roman Empire and bring in a kingdom like man's kingdom. He said clearly to Pilate, "my kingdom is not of this world". In mocking the Lord, we see how man today is mocking Jesus Christ. Jesus wears this crown for man. The sacred head is now wounded. I have sung this song more than once and it touches me very deeply.

#### O Sacred Head, Now Wounded

O sacred Head, now wounded,  
With grief and shame weighed down,  
Now scornfully surrounded  
With thorns, Thine only crown;  
O sacred Head, what glory  
What bliss til now was Thine  
Yet though despised and gory  
I joy to call Thee mine

2. What Thou, my Lord, hast suffered,  
Was all for sinners gain;  
Mine, mine w-as the transgression,

But Thine the deadly pain.  
Lo, here I fall, **my** Savior!  
    Tis I deserve Thy place;  
Look on me with Thy favor,  
Vouchsafe me to Thy grace.

3. The joy can never be spoken,  
Above all joys beside,  
When in Thy body broken

    I thus with safety hide.

My Lord of Life, desiring  
Thy glory now to see,  
Beside Thy cross expiring,  
I'd breathe my soul to Thee.

4. What language shall I borrow  
To praise Thee, heavenly friend,  
For this **my** dying sorrow,  
Thy pity without end?  
Lord make me Thine forever,  
Nor let me faithless prove  
Oh let me never, never  
Abuse such dying love

5. Forbid that **I** should leave Thee  
O Jesus leave not me!  
By faith I would receive Thee  
Thy blood can make me free  
When strength and comfort languish  
And I must hence depart  
Release me then from anguish  
    By Thine own wounded heart

6. Be near when **I** am dying  
    Oh show Thy cross to me  
    And for **my** succor flying

Come  
Lord  
and set  
me free  
These  
eyes  
new  
faith  
receivin  
g  
From  
Jesus  
shall not  
move  
For he  
who  
dies  
believin  
g  
Dies  
safely,  
through  
Thy  
love

Imagine the mockery of those soldiers as they placed that "crown of thorns" on Jesus mocking and not excepting his kingship. Can you imagine the depths of anguish that he suffered when he did not hurt a single human being or beast. Think about the misery of his sufferings, and yet he did not complain.

#### 4. The mockery of the crown.

They denied his claims to be king. They ridiculed his character and rejected his compassion. Remember, "God is not mocked". The Bible

says "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap". They refused his commandments and what is happening in today's society? Where is the Kingship of Jesus acknowledged? And what do we do with his words and commandments? As a matter of fact, you know that our society is so full of lawlessness and the main reason is that we have put the Lord out circulation, and his commandments. We pay the consequences when we mock the Lord and the things pertaining to his kingdom. We see such vile behavior in our society as depicted by the soldiers of that day, We have an interesting verse in **1 John**.

**1 John 3:23** And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

Today people are hearing the gospel and the good news and as they begin to see what the Lord took for us and begin to see his sufferings, then our response should be to surrender rather than perish in defying the commandment of the Lord. Do we love his commandments. The Bible says that his commandments are not grievous, and that does not

apply to everybody, only those who are willing to repent of their sins and acknowledge the Lord as their personal Savior and Lord.

## 5. The meaning of the crown.

The meaning is hidden in the parable of the sower in Matthew chapter 13. As you go through the parable and its' interpretation, you will find that thorns represent the world, the flesh and the devil. It will take you time to study the parable of the sower, and the Lord said that if you do not understand this parable that you will not understand other parables. It is sad to say that so few christians look into the parables and their meanings for the christian. We avoid certain areas of truth because we are not ready for it, but how long can we feed on milk. Milk is good when we are babes, but strong meat or solid food belongs to them who are of age and had their senses exercised to discern between good and evil. As you study the parable of the sower you will see the thorny ground, rocky ground, wayside ground and the good ground. Four kinds of ground and four is the earth. number. You will have to go through the three accounts of the sower in Matthew, Mark and Luke. You will see that the christian has an enemy (not only in Satan), but in the world system that is based on greed, and he has an enemy in his flesh nature which the Bible calls the old man. The "crown of thorns" on his head represent what Jesus took for us as he overcame the world, the flesh and Satan. It was if the Lord was taking the crown away from Satan, the world and the flesh by himself becoming our substitute. We are going to read a couple of scriptures concerning the Lord defeating these three enemies right there on the cross.

Hebrews 2:14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

## 15. And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

16. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.

What is that telling us? Jesus was defeating Satan as he confronted him and his party, by taking the "crown of thorns" brought on mankind on himself. He was bringing death to the enemy. Notice the words "he might destroy him ". The word destroy does not mean to annihilate. We need to get that word right. That he might "render ineffective", that he might make "inoperative" or "powerless", him that had the power of death (that is the devil) and deliver them who through fear of death were all their life subject to bondage. Listen friend, there is only one who defeated death, and the one that brought death on mankind. Jesus did not come to be a victim of the enemy or of death, but to be a victor over these enemies. He came to deliver us from the fear of death, that is conquering the devil.

Lees read a passage in Galatians. It is a reference to the victory that Jesus won for us by bearing the "crown of thorns". Part of that victory was defeating the flesh and its' manifestations. He came to overthrow that old nature in man and bring in his new divine nature.

Galatians 6:14 But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

So the world is crucified unto us and we unto the world. Jesus brings victory over the world and the flesh. The world system is based on three things according to **1 John**.

1 John 2:16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

We can put those three things into three words beginning with an "A" - ambition, avarice and appetite. Think about that.

Let's move on to the problem of the traitor in all of us - the old man - called the flesh. You cannot improve on the flesh or the old nature. The only answer for the flesh is death and not sparing the old nature. That is why King Saul lost the kingdom, He spared Amalek. Amalek represents the flesh, He was the grandson of Esau, who was the twin brother of Jacob. To get victory over Amalek he must die, and be defeated. We come under a new law in the new covenant, the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

Romans 8:3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

4. That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

The flesh and the spirit are enemies. The Bible says that the flesh warreth against the spirit and the spirit warreth against the flesh, and these are contrary one to the other. But, as we move in the power of the Holy Spirit the old nature can no more dominate us. Here Jesus in wearing the "crown of thorns" is bringing utter defeat on the world, the flesh and the devil. You will need to give that some serious consideration. What is the blessing of Jesus wearing the "crown of thorns"? It is given in Isaiah 35.

Isaiah 35:10 And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Notice, sorrow and sighing and all of the effects of the curse are being replaced with an everlasting joy that shall be upon their heads. Sorrow and sighing shall flee away, Beloved, is that not a wonderful exchange, that instead of the curse we receive the blessings. Can we thank the Lord sufficiently for being willing to go through such tremendous humiliation. He bore the "crown of thorns", involving sorrow, grief

and bondage to the curse that we might have the joy of salvation and know the freedom from the curse.

## 6. The mystery of the crown,

The mystery of the "crown of thorns" is hidden in Genesis 22. You know the story well, about Isaac being offered up as a burnt offering. At the point of death, when God restrained father Abraham from taking the life of his son. When Abraham looked behind him he saw a ram caught in the thicket by the horns. He was to take that ram and offer it instead of Isaac.

Genesis 22:11 And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I.

12. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.

(By the way the lad was not 12 years old, the word for lad means a young man ranging from age 18 to the 30's. It is my conviction that Isaac was in his 30'S, to be a wonderful picture of the Lord who would become the obedient son to lay down his life.)

13. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son.

So, what happened to Isaac? Instead of dying, Isaac was spared and was lifted up from the altar. We can see two things there. Isaac is spared and the ram becomes the substitute, and Isaac lives again and is presented alive, as it was symbolically from the dead, (as it tens us in Hebrews II). He was experiencing a foretaste of resurrection. The Bible says, "your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day and was glad" . What did Abraham see? Right there on the mountain top when the son

asked Abraham; "father you have the knife and the fire, I have the wood but where is the lamb for the burnt offering"? Only the Spirit of God could. have given Abraham the words; "my son God will provide himself a lamb". Not only God will provide a lamb, but God will come to us and become the lamb. In other words, Jesus is the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. The Lamb is none other than God himself in a human body! Now, that will take you some time to reflect on. Again, we read, but do we understand? No, and that is so for all of us. We all need help. God will provide himself a lamb. Here is a question - Why didn't the Lord arrange for the lamb, a male lamb, to be brought right into the presence of Abraham. He could have done so. But again we are learning that the ways of God are superior to the ways of man. What is the meaning of the ram caught in the thicket by its horns? The thicket is a thorn bush. For many years I could not fathom the mystery surrounding this ram, until I discovered that rams do not frequent areas that are covered with thorns, by instinct they avoid them. Here it is - for a ram to be caught in a thorn bush shows a deliberate act on the part of the ram. You have the hidden truth, a mystery being solved for us. Jesus did not need to die, he did not need to wear the "crown of thorns", for he committed no offense. Yet, the innocent is willing to take the place of the guilty. Can you imagine love of this kind that the world knows nothing about. My friends, how we all need to be stirred to see that God is calling us to a life of surrender and self sacrifice. That story has many meanings, but as far as the ram caught in the thicket by its horns means that Jesus is willing to be captured when he had power to defend himself. Imagine the power he had over those who came to arrest him. He could have wiped them out in a moment of time, but he did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them. Image one having such power and not abusing it! How many today who want power can handle it? That is why we do not have so much of it, because God can only entrust us with which will bring glory to his name, as opposed to bringing glory to ourselves and a manmade kingdom that many are building today to advertise the flesh, rather than to advertise Jesus Christ. Yes, we need to face the truth in today's christianity and what we are seeing with those who only want outward prosperity, but how many are willing to walk

humbly before God. How many are wining to die to self and lay everything on the altar? That is another story but that is the gospel. He calls us to a life of full surrender and you see that full surrender in Jesus who was willing to be captured. Jesus wearing the "crown of thorns" on his head and submitting is "the ram caught in the thicket by its horns". Why its horns? The horns are in the head and they are a means of defense for the animal. Horns speak of power. Jesus had power to deliver himself out of their hands but he would not do so. He came to set us free. O what love! O what love! Evermore shall I sing it, O what love!

Incidentally for those who study the story; the last altar Abraham built was on Mt. Moriah, and he never built another altar. Have you ever wondered why? That was the fourth altar that he built and why is it not recorded that he built another one. Simply because, when Jesus died on the cross, there was no need for the cross to be repeated and animal sacrifice came to an end. Halleluyahl The cross was to show us the finished work of Christ. Once he must die, but not a second or third time, then rise from the dead as seen in Isaac being lifted up from the altar. This truth is beautifully given in Genesis 22. Another thought is the "crown of thorns" precedes the blooming of the Rose of Sharon. Who is the Rose of Sharon? None other than the Lord himself. You can't have in the natural a rose without thorns. Jesus wears the "crown of thorns" so we can become the beneficiaries of the finished work and we can take on the fragrance of the Rose of Sharon and begin to praise and worship and adore him, who is worthy of all honor and glory and praise!

Thorns also speak of security. It speaks of God's people who are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. A tiny bird builds its nest in a hedge full of prickles, why? To shelter her little ones from harm. What is that to tell us? The Lord gives us shelter from the world, the flesh and the devil, because we take refuge in the one that bore the "crown of thorns". We are safe and secure in him. There is a beautiful song;

Under His wings I am safely abiding;  
Though the night deepens and tempests are wild,  
Still I can trust Him, I know He will keep me;  
He has redeemed me, and I am His child.

Under His wings, under His wings,  
Who from His love can sever?

Under His wings my soul shall abide,

Safely abide  
forever.

2

Under His wtngs+-what a refuge in sorrow!  
How the heart yearningly turns to His rest!

Often when earth has no balm for my healing,

There I find comfort, and there I am  
blest.

3

Under His wlngs=-oh, what precious enjoyment!  
There will I hide till life's trials are o'er;  
Sheltered, protected, no evil can harm me;  
Resting in Jesus I'm safe evermore.

What I am telling you is worth shouting halleluyah more than 100 times, because the Lord has made provision for us when we could not help ourselves!

## 7 -The message of the crown.

What is the message - if you reject Messiah and mock him you will die in your sins. If you accept him and make room in your heart through repentance and faith then you will receive the blessing of Abraham. Jesus took the curse that you and I might receive the blessings of the new covenant. We who once were his enemies are now his friends and we find pardon from our sins and peace with God. We become his sheep. In Matthew 25:31-46 you have the parable of the sheep and the goats. The sheep are on the right hand and the goats are on the left hand. These are the nations, divided into two camps. Today there are two groups of nations, whether you believe it or not, the sheep nations and the goat nations. The battle is between the east and the west.

Those that take a stand for the Lord are acknowledged by him, but those who reject him and are head strong are rejected of the Lord. Do we want to be on his left hand or on his right hand?

We cannot close this session without telling you about the end of the Bible. When the Lord brings forth the new heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, then certain things will be missing in that new world. You will have to read for yourselves starting in Revelation 22.

Revelation 22:3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:

4. And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

5. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

Don't you love that statement, "there shall be no more curse", God has to hide his face from sin, but you see here a redeemed people who can look upon his face. His name in their foreheads means they have taken on his nature and character. They wear and bear the image of the overcomer himself, Jesus Christ.

No more sorrow, no more pain. It is refreshing to read how the Lord came to overthrow the failure of the first man and to bring in the rule of the second man. What he has promised to them that accept him now as Savior and Lord. And make him King of their lives.

Before we close I want to read a poem that someone wrote that is very profound but so simple.

### The Cross Was His Own

They borrowed a bed to lay His head

When Christ the Lord came down;  
They borrowed the ass in the mountain pass  
For Him to ride to town;  
But the crown He wore and the cross He bore  
were His own -The cross was His own.

He borrowed the bread  
when the crowd He fed  
On the grassy mountain side,  
He borrowed the dish of broken fish  
With which He satisfied;  
But the crown He wore and the cross He bore  
Were His own- The cross was His own.

He borrowed a ship in which to sit  
To teach the multitude;  
He borrowed a nest in which to rest,  
He never had a home so crude;  
But the crown He wore and the cross He bore  
Were His own- The cross was His own

He borrowed a room on His way to the tomb,  
The Passover lamb to eat;  
They borrowed a cave for Him a grave;  
They borrowed a winding sheet;  
But the crown He wore and the cross He bore  
Were His own - The cross was His own.

The thorns on His head were worn in my stead,  
For me the Saviour died.  
For guilt of my sin the nails drove in  
When Him they crucified;  
Though the crown that He wore  
And the cross that He bore  
Were His own--  
They rightly were mine!

-Author Unknown -

No wonder the great bymn writer wrote; love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.

We will continue this theme, Lord wining, on the crowns that Jesus wears. You will be amazed to see what Jesus received from the Father because he was willing to submit to all of the horrors of Calvary. No wonder Paul wrote; God hath highly exalted him and given him a name above every other name. That at the name of Jesus Christ every should bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord of things in heaven and of things in earth, and of things under the earth.

We will continue the crowns of Jesus the next time he gives us the opportunity to fellowship. To many of us today want crowns, O yes we want all the blessings, but we do not want to go through the testings. We want the crOWD, but we avoid the cross. Where do you see preaching today on radio, television - put altogether - how many are teaching the way of the cross, death to self and total submission to God. And, total sanctification of spirit, soul, and body. That is why we see such an anemic christianity in our midst. But, I tell you that God is about to raise up a people who have decided to follow Jesus and no turning back. The cross before them and the world behind them, no turning back. Such a people are willing to wear the

"crown of thorns"  
and go through rejection, pain, suffering, and  
misunderstanding.  
Instead of avoiding the "crown of thorns" they submit to  
the Lord and  
have the attitude of Ioseph who told his brothers after they  
ridiculed  
and humiliated him, mocked him and sold him into  
slavery, as for you,  
you meant it for evil God meant it for good. That is why  
Paul tells us to  
be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. You  
and I cannot  
do that, but let us surrender to the Lord who alone can  
change us and  
put in us the power of his spirit that we can overcome evil  
with good,  
and give blessings instead of cursings. Remember the  
beatitudes are  
fun of blessed things, Read them, they should be the  
attitudes the

christians should possess all the time through the in workings of God and his Holy Spirit.

